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AUTHOR Bean, Thomas W.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to collect information on college students' perceptions of adjunct guide material used in conjunction with textbook reading assignments in history and philosophy courses. The three types of guide materials developed by history, philosophy, and reading department faculty were (1) selective reading guides--a series of instructor-devised statements to accompany a reading assignment and provide a model for selective reading; (2) graphic post organizers--visual diagrams completed by students after reading so that they depict hierarchical relationships among concepts; and (3) vocabulary concept guides--materials designed to extend students' denotative understanding of technical vocabulary to show relationships among key terms. Nineteen students from a philosophy class and 37 students from a history class elected to take a one-hour ten-week minicourse in critical reading in which the guides were used. The students completed evaluation forms on the materials after they had acquired experience using each type. History students reported that all three guide types were helpful to them, while philosophy students preferred graphic post organizers to the other two types. Despite positive ratings, however, the guides seemed to have little transfer effect. (FL)

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Thomas W. Bean, Ph.D.
JoAnn Wells
Hallie Yopp
Reading Department
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634

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Thomas W. Bean, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Reading Department
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634

JoAnn Wells
Assistant Professor
Reading Department
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634

Hallie Yopp
Research Assistant
Reading Department
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634

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University faculty generally agree that students ought to acquire information from textbooks independently and interpret content material critically (Hancock and Moss, 1979). Toward that end, two divergent instructional approaches have been explored: The use of manipulative or instructor-devised adjunct aids, and metacognitive or student-devised self-monitoring strategies (Ford, 1981). Manipulative approaches direct students' attention to important concepts in text and increase academic engaged time through such devices as adjunct questions (Andre, 1979) and graphic post-organizers (Barron, 1979). Metacognitive strategies require the reader to self-select important information from the text and typically include such familiar aids as note-taking and underlining, as well as more esoteric techniques such as SQ3R (Anderson, 1980).

The major difference between manipulative and metacognitive approaches is that in the former case important text information is made explicit by the instructor. In the latter case, students must guess at crucial information from the text, in part by trying to figure out what the instructor deems important (Mosenthal and Na, 1980). In a comparative review of manipulative and metacognitive approaches, Anderson (1980) concluded that manipulative approaches encourage deep semantic processing of key textual information while metacognitive strategies are only as

effective as a read-reread approach. Indeed, "expert" strategies such as SQ3R may encourage only surface level memorization of text concepts rather than deep semantic processing (Ford, 1981). Since metacognitive strategies require self-selection of key concepts (Anderson, 1980), they are most useful to a student who already possesses a reasonable degree of prior knowledge in a discipline (Ford, 1981). Thus, manipulative, instructor-devised adjunct aids may be a prerequisite to metacognitive strategies, particularly for Freshmen new to a discipline.

While we have a fairly substantial body of literature attesting to the facilitative effects of manipulative, adjunct aids (Anderson, 1980; Andre, 1979), relatively little is known about students' perceptions of adjunct aids. There is an absence of quantitative and qualitative attitudinal data in adjunct studies and few efforts to investigate the long-range transfer effects of manipulative approaches.

In one of the few studies exploring students' perceptions of adjunct guides, Laffey and Steele (1979) had teachers in a variety of secondary content areas develop study guides and administer a post-study guide evaluation instrument. Students' responded anonymously to a five item yes-no questionaire rating the degree to which guide questions were well-constructed and facilitated comprehension. Student guide ratings averaged in the 90 percent range with negative responses focusing on unfamiliar vocabulary used in some of the teacher-devised questions.

Laffey and Steele concluded that students value manipulative aids to text comprehension.

The purpose of the present study was to collect information on university students' perceptions of adjunct guide material used in conjunction with text reading assignments in History 110A (Western Civilization) and introductory Philosophy 100 at California State University, Fullerton during 1980-81. These data were collected during the first year of a funded staff development project (Bean, 1981; Mend, 1981).

Project Design

Faculty from History, Philosophy, and Reading were released from a course and met during the Fall, 1980 semester in a planning seminar involving three major tasks: 1) text analysis; 2) development of adjunct guide material; 3) development of a student rating scale for the guides.

The History text (McKay, Hill, and Buckler, 1979) presented a large volume of information in an attribute structure. We felt that selective reading guides (Cunningham and Shablak, 1975), alerting students to important information in the text would be helpful. Therefore, the History professor highlighted all major concepts in the text for the Reading instructor. The selective reading guides and other adjunct material reflected concepts marked in the text. The following three types of guide material were developed for History: 1) Selective Reading Guides -- A series of instructor-devised statements that accompany a reading assignment and provide a model for purposeful, selective reading; 2) Graphic Post-Organizers (Barron, 1979) -- A visual diagram completed by students after reading such that it depicts hierarchical relationships among concepts; 3) Vocabulary Concept Guides (Herber, 1978) -- Extends students' denotative understanding of technical vocabulary to show relationships among key terms.

The Philosophy text (Plato, 1979) consisted of an argumentative series of narrative dialogues. Based on this analysis we developed

three types of guides: 1) Anticipation Guide (Readence, Bean, and Baldwin, 1981) -- A series of higher-order pre-reading statements that students agree with or challenge; 2) Study Guide Questions (Herber, 1978) -- A series of questions designed to advance students' comprehension beyond the explicit level; 3) Graphic Post-Organizers.

During the Spring, 1981 semester students enrolled in the large History 110A sections could elect to take a one credit hour, 10 week mini-course in Critical Reading. Adjunct guides developed during the Fall semester comprised the core of the syllabus for this course along with some metacognitive strategies such as summary sheets linking text and lecture concepts with predictions of possible exam questions. Two sections of the mini-course were offered with a total enrollment of 37 students. A cloze test from an early selection in the text revealed that students were in the instructional range indicating they would benefit from the manipulative guidance. Thus, students completed the guide material independently and convened in small groups to defend their responses during the mini-course.

In contrast to the History mini-course, 19 Philosophy students worked with the guide material in conjunction with their regular class. A cloze test on the Plato text also placed these students in the instructional range.

Guide Evaluations and Results

Students completed an evaluation form on the guide material after they had acquired experience using each type of guide.

The evaluation instrument contained two to three closed statements for each type of guide with a rating of: 5= helpful; 3= somewhat helpful; 1= not helpful. Students applied these ratings to statements such as the following: "Assisted my understanding of concepts in the text; helped me retain concepts in the text." A section for open-ended suggestions and comments followed the closed items. The overall format was similar to that used by Laffey and Steele (1979) with secondary students.

The three forms of History guides used in the mini-courses received the following average scores (n=35) out of a possible 100 percent:

1. Vocabulary Concept Guides (90%)
2. Graphic Post-Organizers (90%)
3. Selective Reading Guides (82%)

These positive ratings closely parallel those reported by Laffey and Steele for secondary students. One possible explanation for students' lower rating of the selective reading guide may be their growing familiarity and independence with the History text. As they developed a schema for this text during the 10 week course, they were less in need of the explicit guidance provided by this aid. Indeed, this explanation is consistent with Ford's (1981) notion that manipulative approaches form a good base for more metacognitive strategies. For example, students can generate their own post-organizers of text concepts once they have a model for doing so (Barron, (1979).

Philosophy students (n=12) produced the following average ratings for guide material used in conjunction with the regular Philosophy class:

1. Graphic Post-Organizers (81%)
2. Study Guides (65%)
3. Anticipation Guide (46%)

Students' apparent preference for graphic post-organizers may reflect the greater amount of time we spent in class with this form of guide. However, it proved to be the most helpful adjunct we used in Philosophy class as evidenced by students' open-ended comments on the evaluation form: "It enhances discussion; I am remembering more of the concepts; It pulled out the main concepts of the reading; It deepened my understanding of what was going on in the dialogues."

It is important to note that students read the text and attempted to complete graphic post-organizers on their own. They then met in small groups in the regular Philosophy class to verify or edit these. A recent meta-analysis of research on graphic post-organizers found that partially completed, post-reading organizers contribute more to students' comprehension than organizers that were completely constructed by an instructor and presented to students before a reading assignment (Moore and Readence, 1980). The process of searching the text to locate concepts for the graphic organizer, then writing-in this information and finally verifying and discussing choices with fellow class members appears to increase deep semantic processing.

In comparison to the History mini-course group, students in the Philosophy section gave the guide materials a lower overall rating. This is probably due to the amount of time devoted to guides in the context of the regular Philosophy class. Only about 15 minutes or a maximum of 30 minutes per week was devoted to small group guide discussion. Students were not given points for completing the guides nor was their grade in the class contingent upon guide completion. Despite these factors, students tended to complete the guides and discuss them actively in the small group sessions. However, in retrospect, the greater amount of time afforded by a mini-course blocked to a lecture section clearly makes the use of guide material more feasible at the college level. Moreover, the mini-course time frame allows for the transition to more metacognitive strategies after students have a good knowledge base in the discipline.

Study guides were used relatively little in the Philosophy class. Students tended to feel that experientially-based questions such as "If you were on the jury at Socrates' trial, how would you have voted:" contributed less to their understanding of the text than the contrastive graphic post-organizers. However, students are somewhat unaccustomed to answering experiential questions which may partially explain their lack of enthusiasm for these guides. This problem could be resolved by including a greater balance of textually-explicit and experiential items on early guide material.

We used only one anticipation guide in the Philosophy class. It was presented to students before the first selection they read in Plato. Anticipation guides typically involve the use of value

statements related to a text. Unfortunately, this guide was simply too advanced for students at the initial stage of reading Plato. It was apparent in their guide responses that they overlooked Socrates' ironic tone on their first reading. A good series of textually-explicit and interpretive study guide questions would have been better at this stage of the class.

Discussion

One obvious advantage of having students rate the value of adjunct guides is that it provides information that may influence needed revisions. Indeed, during the second year of this project we are pilot-testing guides with Freshmen in Economics 100 and conducting a comparative study of three approaches to evaluating guide material. One approach involves a brainstorming session with Economics students focusing on positive and negative aspects of the guides in addition to suggestions for their revision. The evaluation session is conducted by a faculty member unknown to the students to reduce any instructor bias. We may find that this informal procedure provides more useful information than a retrospective evaluation form.

Although students' positive rating of the guides, particularly in History implies they are useful, we have little evidence of their transfer effect (Andre, 1979). Thus, during the second year of the project, a sub-sample of first year History and Philosophy students will be interviewed to determine the degree to which they are using any of these reading strategies in other courses.

The results of our first year project seem to confirm Ford's (1981) contention that manipulative approaches are a necessary prelude to metacognitive strategies. Students who engage text assignments with a combination of both approaches are likely to achieve the critical level of conceptual understanding expected in their university classes.

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